

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Following is a listing of all claims in the present application, which listing supersedes all previously presented claims:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A droplet ejector, comprising:
a fluid path through which a fluid moves, a nozzle being formed on one end of the fluid path;
a volumetric structure formed in the fluid path and having a predetermined size, the volumetric structure being sensitive to an external stimulus and being capable of varying ~~in~~ the predetermined size to eject a droplet of the fluid through the nozzle; and
a stimulus generator configured to generate and apply the, ~~which applies a~~ stimulus to the volumetric structure to vary a the predetermined size of the volumetric structure and to remove the stimulus to adjust the volumetric structure to the predetermined size, wherein the droplet ejector is configured to eject the droplet of fluid upon application of the stimulus.
2. (Original) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 1, wherein the volumetric structure expands in size to eject the droplet through the nozzle, and the stimulus generator applies the stimulus to the volumetric structure to expand the size of the volumetric structure.
3. (Original) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 2, wherein the volumetric structure is formed of stimulus sensitive hydrogel.
4. (Original) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 3, wherein the stimulus sensitive hydrogel is electrical field sensitive hydrogel.

5. (Original) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 4, wherein the fluid path comprises:
- a chamber, which is filled with the fluid to be ejected and is formed under the nozzle;
- and
- a channel for supplying the fluid to the chamber,
- wherein the volumetric structure is formed in the chamber.
6. (Original) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 5, wherein the volumetric structure has a columnar shape, a hexahedral shape, or a cylindrical shape.
7. (Original) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 5, wherein the stimulus generator is a pair of electrodes respectively disposed above and below the volumetric structure.
8. (Previously Presented) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 36, wherein the stimulus generator includes a pair of electrodes, one of the pair of electrodes being a cathode,
- the volumetric structure is an electrical field sensitive hydrogel that varies in volume towards the cathode first, and
- the cathode is disposed between the volumetric structure and the nozzle.
9. (Withdrawn) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 5, wherein the stimulus generator is a pair of electrodes respectively disposed at either side of the volumetric structure.

10. (Withdrawn) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 1, wherein the volumetric structure contracts in size to eject the droplet through the nozzle, and the stimulus generator applies the stimulus to the volumetric structure to contract the size of the volumetric structure.

11. (Withdrawn) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 10, wherein the volumetric structure is formed of stimulus sensitive hydrogel.

12. (Withdrawn) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 11, wherein the stimulus sensitive hydrogel is temperature sensitive hydrogel.

13. (Withdrawn) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 12, wherein the stimulus generator is a resistance heating material for applying heat to the volumetric structure.

14. (Withdrawn) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 13, wherein the fluid path comprises:
a chamber, which is filled with the fluid to be ejected and is formed under the nozzle;
and
a channel for supplying the fluid to the chamber.

15. (Withdrawn) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 14, wherein the volumetric structure is formed in the channel.

16. (Withdrawn) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 15, wherein the volumetric structure has a columnar shape or a hexahedral shape.

17. (Withdrawn) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 14, wherein the volumetric structure is formed in the nozzle.

18. (Withdrawn) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 14, wherein the volumetric structure is formed in the chamber.

19. (Original) An ink-jet printhead, comprising:
a substrate on which a manifold for supplying ink is formed;
a barrier layer, which is stacked on the substrate and on which an ink chamber to be filled with ink to be ejected and an ink channel for providing communication between the ink chamber and the manifold are formed;

a nozzle plate, which is stacked on the barrier layer and in which a nozzle, through which an ink droplet is ejected, is formed;

a volumetric structure, which is formed in a position where ink moves, the volumetric structure being sensitive to an external stimulus and being capable of varying in size to eject the ink droplet through the nozzle; and

a stimulus generator, which applies a stimulus to the volumetric structure to vary a size of the volumetric structure.

20. (Original) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 19, wherein the volumetric structure expands in size to eject the ink droplet through the nozzle, and the stimulus generator applies the stimulus to the volumetric structure to expand the size of the volumetric structure.

21. (Original) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 20, wherein the volumetric structure is formed of stimulus sensitive hydrogel.

22. (Original) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 21, wherein the stimulus sensitive hydrogel is electrical field sensitive hydrogel.

23. (Original) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 22, wherein the volumetric structure is formed in the ink chamber.

24. (Original) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 23, wherein the volumetric structure has a columnar shape, a hexahedral shape, or a cylindrical shape.

25. (Original) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 23, wherein the stimulus generator is a pair of electrodes respectively disposed above and below the volumetric structure.

26. (Original) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 25, wherein one of the pair of electrodes is a cathode and is disposed above the volumetric structure.

27. (Withdrawn) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 23, wherein the stimulus generator is a pair of electrodes respectively disposed at either side of the volumetric structure.

28. (Withdrawn) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 19, wherein the volumetric structure contracts in size to eject the ink droplet through the nozzle, and the stimulus generator applies the stimulus to the volumetric structure to contract the size of the volumetric structure.

29. (Withdrawn) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 28, wherein the volumetric structure is formed of stimulus sensitive hydrogel.

30. (Withdrawn) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 29, wherein the stimulus sensitive hydrogel is temperature sensitive hydrogel.

31. (Withdrawn) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 30, wherein the stimulus generator is a resistance heating material for applying heat to the volumetric structure.

32. (Withdrawn) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 31, wherein the volumetric structure is formed in the ink channel.

33. (Withdrawn) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 32, wherein the volumetric structure has a columnar shape or a hexahedral shape.

34. (Withdrawn) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 31, wherein the volumetric structure is formed in the nozzle.

35. (Withdrawn) The ink-jet printhead as claimed in claim 31, wherein the volumetric structure is formed in the ink chamber.

36. (Previously Presented) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 2, wherein the volumetric structure exhibits a non-isotropic variation in size upon application of the stimulus.

37. (Previously Presented) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 2, wherein the volumetric structure is formed on a surface that defines a portion of the fluid path, and the volumetric structure expands in first and second directions upon application of the stimulus, the first and second directions being orthogonal to each other.

38. (Previously Presented) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 37, wherein the volumetric structure has a first end disposed on the surface that defines a portion of the fluid path, a second end opposite to the first end and a side portion connecting the first and second ends, and

wherein the side portion and the second end are exposed to the fluid.

39. (Previously Presented) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 1, wherein the volumetric structure is configured to expand to a size greater than its original size.

40. (Previously Presented) The droplet ejector as claimed in claim 1, wherein the volumetric structure is configured to contract to its original size.